(c) if so, the reasons that production with "High Wall Mining" has not commenced even after two years;

(d) whether Government would probe the financial loss to SCCL due to delay for using the technology; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA): (a) Yes, Sir. To conserve and facilitate the optimum extraction of valuable coal reserves locked beneath high walls in opencast mines, Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) had placed an order for production of coal using high wall mining technology on M/s. Advanced Mining Technology Pvt. Ltd. Hyderabad.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) As per the agreed terms, the agency shall do scientific investigation to facilitate SCCL to obtain permission of Directorate General of Mines Safety (DGMS). The work shall commence within one year from the grant of DGMS permission. DGMS granted permission for Extraction of Coal with High Wall Mining technology at Ramgundam Opencast-II project of SCCL on 14.5.2008. Hence, there is no delay of work schedules as per contract.

(d) and (e) Does not arise in view of reply given to parts (b) and (c) above.

Coal production

†1874. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of domestic companies or individual groups permitted for coal production or mining and lifting till now;

(b) the quantity of such coal;

(c) whether it does not infringe the rights of public sector, Coal India Ltd. (CIL);

(d) the rate of coal lifted either by public sector or private sector;

(e) whether it is cheaper than the other countries of the world;

(f) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(g) whether Government intends to hike the price of the coal produced in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA): (a) and (b) As on date, 161 public and private sector companies registered under the Indian Companies Act, 1956 have been allocated 198 coal blocks with geological reserves of about 42 billion tonnes under the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973.

(c) No, Sir.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(d) A total of 42 coal blocks including 2 small and isolated patches with geological reserves of approximately 7420 million tonnes have been allocated for commercial mining. Out of these, only 2 small and isolated patches have commenced production and these produced 0.329 million tonnes of raw coal during the year 2007-08, which is lifted and consumed by private sector companies.

(e) The price of coal in international market is very volatile. However, it is gathered from secondary sources that the price of coal produced by the subsidiary coal companies of C1L is cheaper than the price of coal produced in other countries even in energy terms.

(f) The price of coal produced by CIL sources is arrived at taking into consideration the cost of inputs for production of coal, acceptability of coal prices in the market etc.

(g) The pricing of coal is deregulated. The coal companies are empowered to fix the coal price.

Singareni Collieries Co. Ltd. (SCCL)

1875. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Singareni Collieries Co. Ltd. (SCCL) has decided to bring 'High Wall Mining' technology which undertake mining of thin coal seams with high productivity;

(b) if so, complete details thereof with terms and conditions of the tenders floated for the technology;

(c) whether there have been violation of tender conditions resulting into a loss of more than Rs. 150 crores to Singareni Collieries;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) whether Government would investigate the procurement process and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. To conserve and facilitate the optimum extraction of valuable coal reserves locked beneath high walls in opencast mines, Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) had placed an order for production of coal using high wall mining technology on M/s. Advanced Mining Technology Pvt. Ltd. Hyderabad with the following criteria stipulated for the above technology provider:—

(1) Eligibility:

(i) Manufacturer having major equipment in the proposed technology for at least 5 years. OR

(ii) Successfully operated in operation of the proposed method of mining for at least 5 years. OR